The Office of the Northwest Territories Languages Commissioner

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Cover photo:
Premier Stephen Kakfwi, Jane Charlie Sr. and Fibbie Tatti.

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Message from the Languages Commissioner

The week of February 4, 2003 was our third Advisory Board meeting with Elders and representatives of all the Official Language families of NWT. When the need for the Advisory Board was identified, there were questions as to how this could be achieved. Our office does not have the capacity to manage the logistics for a meeting of this size. The success of these meetings has been truly a reflection of the people's commitment to culture, language and the North. One cannot thank the Aboriginal organizations and the Educational Divisional Boards enough for their contributions and constant support.

I am now three years into my mandate. It is a good time to reflect on what has been accomplished and to set new goals. It has always been the belief of this office that it must represent the people. It is the people who determine the direction for this office. In the last two years, our office has accomplished this through the continued involvement of the Advisory Board.

The Advisory Board consists of committed frontline workers who have been identified by their communities and who have made language and culture their lives' work. They represent all language groups and they speak to the concerns of language and culture for the people they embody. It is through the Office of the Languages Commissioner that these concerns are delivered to the Legislative Assembly. For many of us who have been working with languages, we cannot emphasize enough the contributions of the Elders who attend these meetings, even after some 20 years. Elder Elizabeth Mackenzie once said, "Embrace language the same way you would shower yourself in laughter."

A major triumph was increasing the visibility of the office and ensuring that people knew they could seek assistance in matters relating to languages. Over the 30 years that I have worked with languages, I understand how critical it is to have an office such as this for the people of the NWT. The dangerous state of our Aboriginal languages and the need to be a constant reminder to the decision-makers illustrates the reasons why it is imperative to maintain the Office of the Languages Commissioner.

I would like to publicly acknowledge the support and encouragement from the following individuals: NWT Commissioner Glenna Hansen, Premier Stephen Kakfwi, Deputy Premier Jim Antoine, Hon. Joe Handley, President of the Dene Nation Bill Erasmus, MLA Mackenzie Delta David Krutko, and MLA Range Lake Sandy Lee.

In conclusion, I look at my own upbringing and childhood experiences. Many of us have been fortunate to have our grandparents with us as we were growing up. The Dene people are fortunate that they are able to adopt grandparents if they have none. Every Elder was referred to as a grandparent. In our household, my grandfather was my father, my mother, my friend, my teacher, and the holder of our peoples' history and experiences. He nurtured my growth, appreciated the delight of my new experiences and calmly explained through a related story the events unfolding.

Language is that. It is experiences enfolded in culture. It came from the Elders and the experiences of our people. It is experiences passed down through time and reflected in stories. It is nurtured and unfolding with much support by many. The responsibility for carrying it forward into the future rests with everyone. I find it so encouraging that our frontline language workers are so dedicated.

The spirit and enthusiasm of the Advisory Board delegates is echoed in the words of the late Elder Philip Crapeau who stated: "One wish was to tell everyone to try to keep your spirit strong and bravely meet the goals you set for yourselves."

Mahsi,

Fibbie Tatti

Languages Commissioner of the NWT

Fibbie Tatti, Kaidyne and Jay at Midway Lake, NWT.

Advocacy

The purpose of Advocacy is twofold: recognize and encourage groups and/or individuals in their language work; and encourage people to claim their language rights under the *Official Languages Act*.

Community visits by the Languages Commissioner is key to ensuring that this office understands what is happening at a community level. It provides an opportunity to see and hear, firsthand, what the language instructors and Elders want with regard to language retention.

2002-2003

Target	Action	Location	Date
Community	Presentation to the Foreign Affairs Department	Yellowknife, NT	April 2002
	Native Women's Association of the NWT	Yellowknife, NT	October 2002
	Dene Cultural Institute	Hay River, NT	November 2002
	NWT Public Library Presentation	Yellowknife, NT	November 2002
	Treaty 8 and Treaty 11 Agreement	N'dilo, NT	November 2002
	ECE Idaa Trail Presentation	Rae-Edzo, NT	January 2003
	Aboriginal Languages Month	Yellowknife, NT	March 2003
Regional	Dehcho Regional AGM	Kakisa, NT	June 2002
	Dene Nation National AGM	Fort Simpson, NT	July 2002
	Midway Festival	Fort McPherson, NT	August 2002
	Gwich'in Tribal Council AGM	Aklavik, NT	August 2002
	Sahtu Regional Assembly	Tulita, NT	September 2002
	Dene Nation Leadership Meeting	Yellowknife, NT	November 2002
	Dene Nation Leadership Meeting	Rae-Edzo, NT	November 2002
	RCMP Aboriginal Policing Recruitment Poster Ceremony	Yellowknife, NT	October 2002
	Advisory Board Meeting	Yellowknife, NT	February 2003
National	Ombudsman Conference	Regina, Saskatchewan	April 2002
	Aboriginal Languages Conference	Edmonton, Alberta	April 2002
	Languages Workshop	Edmonton Alberta	June 2002
	Ombudsman Conference	Winnipeg, Manitoba	October 2002
	Dream Catcher Youth Conference	Edmonton, Alberta	October 2002
	Ombudsman Conference	Victoria, BC	March 2003

Comments

The Languages Commissioner makes presentations to the public, various language organizations and government officials to reinforce the importance of language. Individuals were invited to speak confidentially about any concerns they may have about their language rights. The Languages Commissioner's main duty is to provide personal contact at a community level to give positive reinforcement to the communities, groups and individuals who work very hard at retaining languages and culture. It is the intricate interweaving of these elements that makes the Office of the Languages Commissioner so important. The Office of the Languages Commissioner ensures the accountability of various funding agencies to make sure that funding is directed to the sources where they are needed.

It is critical that language workers have continued support at the highest level. A good beginning would be at the Legislative Assembly. One of the

best examples of the use of languages was the recent initialing of the Agreement between the Tlicho and the Akaitcho Nations in N'dilo. Each Chief from the communities addressed the gathering in their own language. The land was able to hear again the echoing words of their ancestors. The use of one's language has a powerful impact and enables one to reach back into history.

The Office of the Languages Commissioner is still diligently trying to establish the necessary budget for interpreter/translating services. Since the demise of the Language Bureau, the Office of the Languages Commissioner has been operating without a budget for interpreting/translation (I/T) services and has been unsuccessful with special requests for I/T funding. The Office of the Languages Commissioner's business is language. It is essential that meetings, correspondence, public communications and workshops be conducted with the services of interpreters and translators.

Emily Jones and elder at N'dilo gym.

The Languages Commissioner attended the retirement celebrations of Mary Effie Snowshoe in Fort McPherson. MLA David Krutko, seated with Mary Effie and her family.

Research

The function of Research is to provide socio-linguistic research relevant to the Northwest Territories that monitors language trends and identifies critical success factors of language development projects. Collection of past studies in the development of official languages of the Northwest Territories provide language workers with a reference base and much needed materials for new program development.

Objective	Action	Status
Acquisition of contemporary language research on NWT languages	Works of Wendall White, Karen Rice, Ed Cook, Vic Monus, June Helm, Schott Rushforth, Robert Young, Leslie Saxon, Phil Howard, NWT Teaching and Learning Centres, GNWT Departments, and Cultural Associations	Work in progress
NWT Case Studies	Family involvement in French advocacy initiatives	Work in progress
	Dene Kede and Innukatigiit Curricula	Review Implementation
	Fall Caribou Hunts and documentary by CBC Television	Complete
Other Jurisdictions	Study of other jurisdictions and identification of critical success factors in language programs and legislation	Work in progress
	Study Hawaiian Language Nesting Project	Proposed

Comments

People have to ask themselves: "Is my language strong?" Individuals need to ask themselves serious questions concerning the use of their language: "Do my children speak our language at home?"

'Children's Language' is one of the simplest, yet effective, ways to review a language's growth or decline. There are many 'statistical tools' that can be used to study a language's growth or decline but, as we know here in the North, we are now looking at the very survival of our languages. Funding for massive surveys are not necessary at this stage and will only divert critical resources from where it is needed most, at the community level. Ask yourself this simple question: "What language do my children mainly use in the home and within their community?"

If the answer is 'not their Mother tongue', then your community is at risk of losing their language.

Aboriginal Head Start Programs are the best place to start a 'Children's Language Program'. It is from this basic platform that a concentrated effort to save a language can be launched. Research in the areas of language retention and language growth can be initiated from the Aboriginal Head Start Program. Later, using the Fishmann Model, one could identify language resources in the North. There are many types of immersion programs that are available to use. Finding out which ones would best suit specific community needs does not require a great deal of research. Language workers within the communities could assess the types of programs most needed within their community.

Beyond these Aboriginal Head Start Programs, we teach our children to read and write, but we need the resources (books, CDs) written in our language. We also need more advanced learning materials.

How can we expect children to continue with their language development if there is nothing for them to read or listen to that is in their language? What reasons can we give them to continue their language development?

The Government of the Northwest Territories is currently reviewing how it operates as a government and what changes or adaptations the government may have to make with the settlement of land claims and the various First Nation self-government structures that will be created through this process. Language should be at the forefront of this government restructuring. How is the GNWT going to adapt to the notion that the language of governance of these newly developed self-government structures may be an Aboriginal language? Nunavut has the goal of 2020 as the year that the language of governance will be Inuktitut for this newest territory. What are the language goals within the NWT?

The current precarious nature of our languages in the North leaves us with very definite steps that need to be taken immediately. However, the demand must come from community members who currently do not feel comfortable speaking their Mother tongue and from individuals who wish to save their language from extinction.

This effort must be a unified one. Each community is at a different language stage. Funding and resource materials must be shared and allotted fairly to recognize these disparities. The goal of saving our languages from extinction should be the concern of every community regardless of the language they speak in their community.

Marsha, a Grade 1 student at Weledeh, during the Multicultural Fair in Yellowknife – Spring 2003.

Monitoring

The function of Monitoring is to provide accountability for language funding.

Objective	Action	Status
Monitor Canada-NWT Agreement for Languages Agreement	Identify allocation of funds, purpose of funds, whether objectives were met and whether departments conducted evaluation	Work in progress
Monitor Vote 1 (GNWT) Language Funding	Identify allocation of funds, purpose of funds, whether objectives were met and whether departments conducted evaluation	Work in progress
Public Satisfaction Surveys	Language services in health care	Work in progress
Translation in GNWT Advertising	Track GNWT advertising (ads published in English should also be made available in the other official languages)	On-going

Comments

Allocations for Vote 1 and Vote 4 Language Funding can be found in Appendix Two. The office is committed to ongoing monitoring of activities to ensure that this funding is used for its designated purpose.

The NWT *Official Languages Act* stipulates that all northern official languages have equality of status and rights. This means the public has a right to communicate with and receive services from institutions of the Government of the NWT in any of the official languages.

Government of the NWT newspaper advertisements were tracked between January and April 2003. Results indicate that a majority of these advertisements were only produced in English. It is part of our mandate to encourage the government to produce more advertisements in other official languages to ensure that language rights are upheld.

Month	Type of Advertisement			Total Number of Ads	Number of Ads in English	Number of Ads in French	Number of Ads in Aboriginal	% of Ads in English
	Job	Tender	RFP					
January	38	31	13	82	82	0	0	100%
February	26	15	20	61	61	0	0	100%
March	32	30	8	70	70	0	0	100%
April	2	5	2	9	9	0	0	100%

Radio Taiga – 10th Anniversary in Yellowknife.

Complaints

The function of the Office of the Languages Commissioner in resolving complaints regarding the *Official Languages Act* is to ensure peoples' language rights are upheld under the Act. In addition, investigating complaints provides an insight into whether problems are localized or system-wide. This type of information allows the office to identify the best corrective measures to take in resolving complaints.

Objective	Action	Status
Simplify Complaint Process Inform Public of a Complaint Process	Community Visits	Ongoing/ completed
	Regional Visits	Ongoing
Receive Complaints	Resolve Complaints	Ongoing
Maintain Membership with Canadian Ombudsman Association (COA)	Attend COA Annual Meetings	Ongoing

Comments

Complaints: A total of five complaints were received during 2002-2003. Complaints encompass any of the eleven official languages – primarily French and Dene languages. Time taken to resolve complaints ranged from under one month to more than one year, depending on the complexity of the investigation.

Interpreting/Translation Services

Our investigations brought us to meetings and discussions with Deputy Ministers and Heads of Institutions revealing concerns surrounding Interpreting and Translation (I/T) Services.

Aurora College officials advised there was very low response to a call for students to take I/T courses. Aurora College officials say low interest can be directly attributed to lack of I/T employment opportunities. This was collaborated by interviews with Health officials who advised they have high need for I/Ts but insufficient funds to hire additional full-time I/Ts.

Community language workers attribute the low interest in I/T training to students' preference to take courses in their home communities where resources are readily at hand. Specifically, Elders are a critical language resource and students can train in an authentic language setting. Some community language workers have requested I/T training courses be delivered in their regions, and Aurora College officials say they would deliver community-based I/T programs but require much more than the $50,000 currently allocated for I/T program delivery.

The root problem is that I/T employment opportunities are limited. And if employment opportunities are limited, why should a community language worker seek training? Ultimately, this means that I/T services are minimal at best. Further, unlike their French counterparts whose training is recognized through certification, Aboriginal language interpreters cannot command as high a rate of pay. Also, without certification, it is very difficult for Aboriginal interpreters to set terms of service. For example, French interpreters are able to stipulate that more than one interpreter must be hired for lengthy interpreting contracts, recognizing that simultaneous interpreting is very demanding work.

Lack of I/T certification puts Aboriginal language interpreters at a great disadvantage and compromises their ability to make a livelihood from I/T work alone. The result is that a number of interpreters must rely on other employment so they can carry out I/T work as a source of secondary work. This limits the availability and quality of service, which in turn limits I/Ts from developing their services into viable businesses.

Given these problems, we must ask whether the GNWT is providing adequate official language services to NWT citizens. Is the spirit and intent of the Act compromised? Are we safeguarding the very people who hold the gift of our official languages?

With the problems surrounding I/Ts, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive strategy that will specifically target improving the current unacceptable situation.

The dramatic decrease in complaints can be attributed to the development of the Advisory Board. It is an excellent means to inform communities, through the Board members, of many aspects concerning language, the Act, one's language rights and what the role is of the Office of the Languages Commissioner.

From April 1, 2002 to April 1, 2003 the office received 38 invitations and 203 inquiries. Many inquires that are handled by this office cannot easily be dealt with by a GNWT department. In many cases they do not have the personnel to deal with these language and cultural inquires. The Office of the Languages Commissioner has become known for its depth of knowledge and ability to answer most inquires by internal research in a quick, accurate, professional and efficient manner. This is due largely to the Language Advisory Board members and the many community language workers who lend their help and support.

Community visits are an important function of the Office of the Languages Commissioner.

Communications

The function of Communications is to stimulate public awareness of official languages, language development initiatives in the NWT, understanding of public rights under the Act, the office's roles and responsibilities, and to respond to inquiries made to the office.

Objective	Action	Status
Receive Inquiries	Resolve inquiries	Ongoing
Web Site	Redesign web site	Work in progress
Quarterly Newsletter	Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer 2002/03 newsletter circulated to 550 organizations and individuals	Complete
Aboriginal Languages Month	NWT-wide TV ads in all official languages during March	Complete
	Newspaper promotional advertisements promoting official languages	Complete
	Information display, Centre Square Mall, Yellowknife	Complete
	Storytelling (Dene stories and legends) with students of Range Lake North Elementary School	Complete
	Storytelling (Dene stories and legends) with elementary students in École Allain St-Cyr	Complete
Language Interviews	CBC interviews conducted in an Aboriginal language	On-going

Comments

The Office of the Languages Commissioner received positive feedback from community members regarding the newsletter. In fact, there were requests for additional copies. The Newsletter has had an impact. It keeps the communities informed of regional language activities, pays tribute to the Elders for their contributions to language initiatives and acknowledges major contributions to languages. In addition, information on all major conferences, nationally and internationally, is provided in our newsletters.

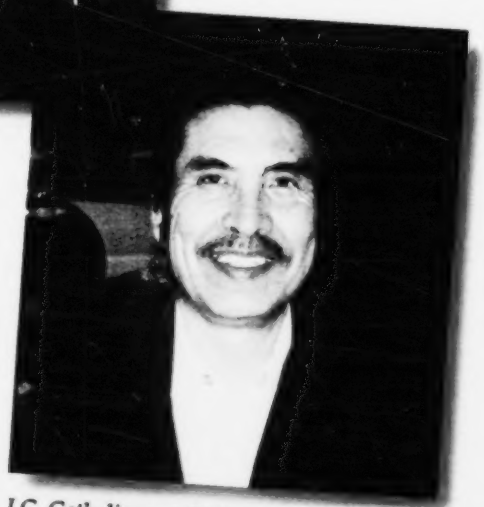
Languages Commissioner Fibbie Tatti storytelling, at the Range Lake School, for Aboriginal Languages Month.

APPENDIX ONE

Transcript of 2001 Advisory Board Meeting and Workshop

Jane Charlie Sr. at Advisory Board meeting in Yellowknife – February 2003.

Inuvialuktun elder Victor Allen of Inuvik, a member of the OLC Advisory Board.



J.C. Catholique at OLC Advisory Board meeting in Yellowknife – February 2003.

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS AND INVITED GUESTS

NWT Languages Commissioner Advisory Board Meeting, February 4-6, 2003

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

GWICH'IN
William Firth
Jane Charlie Sr. (Elder)
Betty Vittrekwa
Eleanor Mitchell

NORTH SLAVEY
Fred Rabesca
Victor Menacho (Elder)
Jane Modeste
Jessie Campbell
Camilla Tutcho
Albertine Ayah

DOGRIB
Elizabeth MacKenzie (Elder)
Rosa Mantla
Terry Douglas
Mary Richardson
James Rabesca

South Slavey
Andy Norwegian
Adele Hardisty (Elder)
Fanny Swartzentruber
Joe Bonnetrouge (Elder)
Doris Camsell

CHIPEWYAN
J.C. Catholique
Marcel Norn (Elder)
Sarazine Basil (Elder)
Georgina Biscaye
Anne Biscaye

INUVIALUKTIN
Emily Kudlak
Victor Allen (Elder)

CREE
Maggie Kurszewski (Elder)
Paula Anderson

CANADIAN HERITAGE
Danielle Couillard
Cynthia Wilna
Sylvie Francoeur

Other – NWT Literacy Council
Helen Balanoff

OFFICE OF THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES:

Fibbie Tatti – Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories
Nancy Gardiner – Public Affairs Liaison
Andrew Hammond – Research Analyst
Olivia Chandler – Executive Secretary
Shannon Gullberg – Legal Advisor

SPECIAL GUESTS:

Glenna Hansen – Commissioner of the Northwest Territories
David Krutko – Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Mackenzie Delta
Bill Erasmus – President of the Dene Nation
Mark Heyck – Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Culture and Heritage Division
Screaming Eagle Dancers

OFFICE OF THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER OF THE NWT
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 4-6, 2003

Day 1, Tuesday, February 4, 2003

Opening Prayer

Opening Comments: Commissioner Glenna Hansen

Introductory comments recognizing that the communities provide direction.

"You know yesterday when I thought about what I was going to say I did not want to write a speech. I thought to myself what I would like to say is something that would encourage and help you when you go back to your communities. That would help you to think about the direction you would like to go in. You know we all started out a New Year, 2003, and all of us set goals and objectives for what we wanted, both for our personal lives and for our professional lives. You know I think that is a really good way to start a new year because when you do that you set the tone for the year.

"When you think about Language and Culture, Language is the Heart of our People and Voices of our ancestors. It identifies where we come from.

"When you talk about culture, it is something that we as parents, instill how we live and what we do in our children. I do not know any of my language. That is not to say that I am not proud of the fact that I am an Inuvialuit from the Mackenzie Delta. I am very proud of that. The way we live, what we do and how we display that is the kind of thing we pass on to our children.

"When I go into the Sahtu, I am so impressed with the fact that I hear the people there, the young people talking in their language. That really impresses me. I think that is something we should hold on to.

"If we all pull together and we work together with the goal of preserving our language and our culture we can do it.

Introduction of Participants

Regional Updates

William Firth: Gwich'in Language Region

William Firth of Fort McPherson spoke briefly about his region on behalf of the Gwich'in Language Community.

Language Plan

Overall, the work has continued since the formation of the language plans for each community. It was really abstract and wasn't something that was realistic. They decided to redo the whole plan and start from the grass roots level.

Immersion Camps

They were doing two immersion camps last summer and the summer before. When you work in this field with students, it's more of a struggle working with people who don't know the language because it's more about trying to teach them the basics rather than trying to compliment the language itself. That is what they are working on.

Betty Vittrekwa (Gwich'in Region):

Materials Development

One of her duties is to create materials for the teachers in the Mackenzie Delta Region, which are Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchic, Inuvik and Aklavik.

This past year they had a cut in budget, which was supposed to go towards a curriculum specialist that was to be hired in the Inuvik region. They had some difficulties this year with the office equipment. Since William and Eleanor have come to the office things are looking a lot better, and the upgrade is coming along well.

Research

Seventeen animal units are upon completion. They will be printed. Schools are being assisted – they come into our office to research. They give presentations to the teachers, which keeps them pretty busy within the office.

Eleanor Mitchell (Gwich'in Region):

Gwich'in Language Dictionary

Materials Development and Teaching Courses

Eleanor is working on a Gwich'in language dictionary. It is for both Gwich'in dialects. This is the fourth edition of their dictionary and it is very near completion. It has a new grammar section with verb paradigms. It should be published near the end of March. Staff will be attending material development and teaching courses, which will help in developing materials for the schools. Eleanor assists William with different projects at the centre.

Jane Charlie Sr.(Gwich'in Region):

Resurgence of the Johnny Charlie Trail

Mrs. Charlie discussed the Chief Johnny Charlie Trail, which she's been traveling on for the past three years. She feels like going again and she's 73 years old.

Fibbie Tatti:

Ms. Tatti just wanted to show appreciation to Jane Charlie and her family for working so hard on this revival of this trail. The kind of inspiration she gives and the leadership she provides by being the person that takes her family's ancestors and her people over that mountain is commendable. Ms. Tatti would like to thank her for providing that information.

Jessie Campbell (North Slave Region):

Research

Elders Biographies and Family History

Cultural Programs

They have been interviewing Elders and getting biographies. She has been giving this to them at the school. They have been working on family history, getting Elders biographies. The band in Tulita eventually would like to publish a book on Elders and family history. They have been doing cultural programs in the school putting on a six-week program every September for Moose hide tanning and preparing moose hides. They invited students from the school to attend and they also had adults attend. They started right from the time they shot the moose in the springtime, every fall most people go moose hunting. They started right from taking the hair off the moose hide right until the hide is tanned. They did that for six weeks. They have also made drums, snowshoes; they showed the students what they make out of moose and caribou hides. They will be continuing their work until their funding runs out in March.

In Norman Wells, this was the first year where an aboriginal language program has been started. It is difficult to get instructors sometimes. They have had three instructors since September. They are still trying to make it work. The program is from grades one to nine. The TLC office has been trying to develop cultural programs for the school. Jessie bought a little dog team that was made a moose skin boat that was made, and packsacks and everything people needed to make cultural progr[illegible]s.

Development of Aboriginal Language Program

She brought kits that can be used in Sahtu schools and information on the Sahtu that can be used in the schools too.

Community and School working together

Also in March, they will be having a workshop in Tulita. This is with the community leaders, Elders, aboriginal language instructors, and TLC's. They are trying to find ways they can work together for the children in the Sahtu region. That is the first week in March.

Shúhtaot'ine CD music

In October, Jessie got a tape from a Tulita drummer. It was music from the Shúhtaot'ine Dene. Originally there were fifty-two songs sung by her grandfather. She sent the tape to Spirit Walker Productions here in town and they restored the tape and put the music on to a CD for them. Out of the 52 songs, they have 32 that are recorded.

(Translator) Victor Menacho (North Slavey Region):

This is an Elder from Tulita, Victor Menacho. In the past when their Elders had gone out on the land, they used to go out on the land and help. We want to work at this to help kids learn how to make hides, tan hides and prepares hides. This is all disappearing.

Reviving the Aboriginal Language

Loss of Elders

"The reason why they take children out on the land is so that our culture and language will not disappear. They try to remember what our ancestors had done because their history is disappearing. They are also trying to restore the drum songs the Shúhtaot'ine people used to sing. They are Jessie's parents and some of them are still singing it. They remember what it was like in the past. They don't want it to be lost.

Teach Own Language

"When people sent their children out in the bush they talked to them with their own language. The reason they were doing all this is so that they don't lose this. It is difficult for the children but if people help them and they revive their own language, they will be really grateful. A long time ago at meetings like this there were a lot of people all the Elders from different communities. Now there are hardly any Elders. Jessie's brother Ricky teaches them in their own language and it seems to be coming back. It will not be done quickly. "

Albertine Ayah (North Slavey Region):

Albertine Ayah of Deline gave an overview of the Deline report. Jessie had talked about the regional and she covered Norman Wells and Tulita.

Language Enhancement Program

The band gets a certain amount of money for Deline's language enhancement program, and Elders to teach children in the school. They teach how to speak their own language and how to sew, hunt and prepare caribou meat and fish.

Geneology

Aboriginal Language Videos and Interviews

The Deline Dene Band and the Uranium Committee teach the community, so there are a lot of people who work on this. They gather their names so it is written in a book. The children today do not know who they were or where they come from. Now they have written it down. The Uranium Committee does videos. They do it (the interviews) in their own language. There is a lot of culture information. Every now and then, the children will go out on the land.

Fred Rabesca (North Slavey Region):

Language in Elementary and High Schools

Not much is going on in Fort Good Hope, other than language is being taught in the schools, both high school and elementary classes. Wilfred Jackson has an "Out on the land program" for youth, teaching them culture and language.

Jessie Campbell (North Slavey Region):

This Wilfred Jackson "Out on the Land Program" has students from all the Sahtu region. There is a six-month program going with a trapping program where he is teaching these young men to do all the trapping skills and everything. They also have a teacher out there on part-time basis, who is working with Renewable Resources and the Sahtu trying to get trapping back.

Camilla Tutcho (Translator) (North Slavey Region):

Residential School

Camilla Tutcho is from Deline. She was sent away to a residential school and stayed there for about 8 years. She never went home. After 7 years, she only spoke South Slavey and English. She originally spoke another dialect from another region.

Taught by listening

One of the Elders said to her: "You are not a white person so you should not be speaking English. You should listen and then you'll know how things are said." She was the one who taught her. She looked after her Elders. She didn't know how to prepare fish because she was raised non-aboriginal for those years. The Elder taught her how to prepare fish and that is how she learned everything again, including her language.

Her last boy, Abraham, asked his father when were they going trapping, and they should go right away. He loves going trapping. Her 66-year old husband says: "I don't feel any pain when I go out on the land. When I come into a non-aboriginal home that was built for us, I feel sick."

"In the past they say that we don't want to let our history go. That is why we are doing this. All of us had grown up in the bush. He will tell us the stories. That is for the children, so they can survive in the future."

Teach Language and Culture

"Our history is going away with our language and culture; the people have to teach their children, continue to teach them, and why is it that it is important to them."

Victor Menacho (Translator):

Bush Life is Healthy

"When I am in the bush, I feel completely healthy. We feel much more healthier on the land. We seem to be always trying to revive something.

Fabulous Chief

"The Tulita Chief is a very fabulous chief. He is very young. He has a lot of time for the people, and he wants to work really hard. If there are hand games, drum dances, and all that, he will be there our chief. The community is reviving. He is always happy. I am very grateful to have that chief. If we continue to teach them, they will learn."

Fibbie Tatti:

Instilling Confidence

Community Wellness

"One of the things that impressed me most: and I have not seen this in a long, long time is in the old community hall of Tulit'a there was about five Elders. In the community hall, they had five learning centers going and in the learning centers, the children were learning while speaking the language. They were learning to make miniature moose skin boats. They were learning to work on a raw moose hide. How

to take the flesh off, how to make strings, how to tan a hide, how do you get it prepared. There were men and women there and they also had food. They had dry-meat, bannock, tea, and juices for all the children. When I was there what really, really impressed me was this went on not one month, not two months, but it went on for about three to five months. Each day there was a different group from the school in the classroom, a classroom that was set up for them by the community. The students were right in there learning from the different learning centers for about half a day then the other students would come in. This happened for months and what was really impressive was they came up with the money, the ideas and the hiring of their own people to create this kind of center. It was really impressive and I was very impressed by it.

"The other thing I was going to say was, there was a report about Wilfred Jackson, On The Land" program he has for the youth. We have heard some really nice things about it and the students reported with confidence about it on the radio. They want to instill that confidence that these kids can do anything they put their minds to.

"(Translator) Sometimes when you travel amongst the communities sometimes you think the people don't understand the Dene languages but they do understand. They are working towards their own wellness and they are working to make their communities a better place. It is good to hear when good things happen."

Break

Fibbie Tatti:

"For most of you who are working with some sort of funding for language and culture activities, we need to remind ourselves that money is available for professional development. The reason I am bringing that up is I feel that if you haven't gone to Midway in Fort McPherson you have to go, you have to put some money aside to go to Midway. I never believe for a moment when we have these meetings that the outcome is going to be what we expect it to be.

"Last year, we did a complete review of the Official Language Act. Resulting from that, were the recommendations that we made to the Special Committee. That report is called: "Keeping Our Minds Strong". It came out in October and was tabled in the House with a copy of it going over to the Special Committee. Those recommendations came directly as a result of the meeting we had last year.

"Since I only have about a year and a half left in the Office, I have to ask myself seriously, "How can I best do the job that I am there for and how can I best serve the people?" I need direction from you with what I should be working on.

"What we have done is accumulated all the recommendations for the past 12 years. Which ones do we need to work on and which ones can we abandon, which ones need to be changed and which ones can we let go completely. This afternoon there is a working group. We can decide which ones of those is the most important and go ahead with them. That is one of the ways I am hoping to help the communities in getting what they want out of this office and the Legislative Assembly. We need to make sure we know what it is we want to bring forward.

"That is what I wanted to say. Thank you very much for coming. I really appreciate those who had scheduled to go to other meetings and rescheduled to come. You don't know how appreciative I am for that. I know there is another meeting going on at the same time as this one and I am really glad you made it here. "

Nancy Gardiner:

Nancy described her work with the Office of the Languages Commissioner, her travel to the communities – a continuation of 19 years of working in the NWT traveling to the communities. Her background is in writing and photography. In her position as Public Affairs Liaison with the OLC, she has attended community events and been involved in promotional activities in Rae Edzo and Hay River as well as Yellowknife. She answers public enquiries, assists with budgets and is organizing activities for Languages Month in March. She is developing a photo bank of OLC community visits for the Languages Office. She is also assisting in editing a special report for the Legislative Assembly in October "Keeping Our Minds Strong". She will give a special presentation to the Advisory Board on that report tomorrow. She organized this Advisory Board meeting and looks forward to working with all the people at this meeting.

Andy Norwegian (South Slavey):

Language Programs

There are a number of language programs in existence in the communities in our region, but Andy talked about the language program in the schools in the South Slavey region.

Language Specialists

Certified Aboriginal Language Teachers

Aboriginal Literacy

They are responsible for nine schools, the two schools in Simpson (the High School and the Elementary School). Every fall, they start off with a regional conference. They discuss with various different language specialists what their needs are. Two areas were identified as a need – the whole area of materials development and further training for language instructors. They applied to Arctic College to deliver courses that were required to get people certified in the area of aboriginal language teaching. This is why they organized to deliver aboriginal literacy in a course this fall. The people were divided into two groups. The people that already have that course were involved in materials development course. That involved developing a year plan and from the year plan developing units based on the topics in Dene Kede.

Development of Verb Dictionary

Linguist Phil Howard, who delivered the *Literacy 1* course was brought in. Phil Howard is coming back and we are likely going to be dividing the group into two again. *Literacy 1* and *Literacy 2* groups.

There is ongoing work on the development of a verb dictionary. It is near completion and will be on CD. There was a delay getting the verb dictionary completed. They already have a noun dictionary.

Materials Documentation

The Department of Education would like to see all of the existing materials documented and they will be taking part in that particular project.

Language Activities Outside of School

Various different language activities that are taking place, this is outside of the school in the communities and they really welcome those programs. "It's always been their opinion that the school alone will not be able to revive the language. Whatever is done at the community level enhances the program in the school. They know the First Nations had applied for funding and had funded language programs taking place out on the land in various different camps that are in existence. The various different programs taking place out in the communities really help the program in existence at the school."

Adele Hardisty (Translator) (South Slavey):

Mission School

Adele said she only attended school for two years. "My father needed me to be on the trapline with him so the Bishop sent me home in the fall."

Her mother taught her to tan hides, make toboggans. "All the knowledge they have given me is with me until now.

"When you go home you have to speak your own language, that's what will carry you into the future. My father used to tell me that school was very important.

"We take children out in the bush and I have been out there with them. We teach them how to work with hides. I keep encouraging them to teach them to speak Dene.

"Then we have to continue holding on to our language because that is from our ancestors and in school when we teach the children native languages, I don't think they will never capture it from the school. It is in our homes, when they come home after school if you speak to them in the native language they will be able to learn it.

"The words of my father"

"The words my father gave is the way I live now and I am so thankful for that. If we continue working on that it probably will get better. "

Joe Bonnetrouge (Translator) (South Slavey region):

Joe Bonnetrouge was raised in the traditional way. When he was a young boy, his father taught him how to work in the bush. He talked all the time about traditional ways. "What I am teaching you now is for the future", he told him, and that is true. If you work at snares and fishnets, if you don't do that how will you raise your family? You have to work for your family in that way. What they have taught Joe is what he survived by. While a young boy, Joe was never taught in English. When he was fifteen years old, he started to go in the bush by himself. He worked at fishnets and snares. He worked at fishnets by himself and when he went beaver hunting there was no boat, no canoe. I had to make my own canoe.

Live the Traditional Way

"When I talk to my children I talk to them is Slavey and they answer me in Slavey. In the bush working making fire and looking after themselves in bush, I taught them that. Also to set traps. When I was a young boy I really worked hard for myself and I tell my children that. Now I am an Elder."

In the past, we used to bring snowshoes and a gun. That is the only way people survived, they carried a gun for survival. In the past people lived the traditional way. When they hunted, and went into the bush, they went for chickens. They cooked for themselves and lived the traditional way.

Doris Camsell (South Slavey Region):

Doris Camsell is from Hay River. She teaches the native language to the children in the school at the Harry Camsell and PA school. Grade one to grade seven every day she teaches the aboriginal language. She teaches them how to write the Dene language as well.

Lack of Teaching Materials

"We don't teach only the aboriginal children, sometimes there are non-aboriginal, and Metis people within classes that want to learn the language as well. They are thankful they have the opportunity to learn the aboriginal language and culture. They are happy about it and really want to learn the aboriginal language and cultural aspects of the language as well. Sometimes it's very difficult. There are no teaching materials like history materials in the classroom. What we put on paper is the way we were raised and the way we were brought up. "

Fibbie Tatti:

"I would like to comment on the Deh Cho presentation. Last fall, not this fall but the fall before, Andy and I went up to Fort Liard, he was going on a trip up there, and I sort of volunteered myself along. We went up to Fort Liard and as you are driving into the community, you can actually see the body of a woman from the mountains. What is so impressive about that is that the Elders say that is where Yamoreya's wife is sleeping. When you go into the community, you can actually see the shape of a woman while she is sleeping on her side. It is just so unbelievable. Every one of the people who are presenting there is just something so special about their land. There is something that is a contribution and it is my way of introducing that language is the heart of the people.

Yamoreya's Unit Display

"For our unit display, we put a collage of people together to identify how we as a people are tied together.

"What we were hoping to do, as was suggested by the NWT Library Association and the NWT Librarians is they would like to have this in every school, so that it would be a platform from which the students could work on, from their region where Yamoreya was in their region and how we can tie all of this together."

Paula Anderson (Cree Region):

Paula Anderson is the Cree language coordinator, working out of Fort Smith and also serving Hay River. She was able to get a full-time translator, which worked out really well this year. They produced a dictionary, which is being published and printed off as we speak.

Aboriginal Head Start Program

Another project they have done is working with the Aboriginal Head Start Program to produce some children's books. They have the Cree word then the English word; a local Fort Smith person did all the pictures. They are also on CD. She has talked with ECE; and they hope to develop them into all the official languages of the NWT.

Cree Language Programs

"We have Cree classes going. We had Cree classes and moccasin making last session. This session included moose hair tufting. We have been getting a lot of people out. We tried to hold just Cree classes and we would only get a few people. By adding in another program, we have been getting a lot more participants.

"We have also been doing a medical terminology book, working with Health and Social Services in Inuvik. We are working with Elders; we had weekly meetings with Elders so they have all the input into what is going on.

"In Hay River we have done a couple of youth camps and we have many Elders in Hay River willing to come out and help. When they come out all they do is speak Cree, which is good because we don't have a lot of speakers.

Growing Together Program

"We've done a couple drum making workshops. We are doing one with mothers and daughters and that is working with Growing Together. Also with Growing Together we are putting on a Cradleboard workshop, which was a suggestion from the Elders. I am making up moss bags before I go for all the kids.

"Working with Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre out of Hay River with the youth interviewing the Cree Elders in Hay River, we are taping them. They speak in English first and if they speak Cree, then in Cree. We will do a bit of a history of the Cree people of the NWT next month if time permits."

Emily Kudlak (Inuinnaqtun region):

Learning Inuinnaqtun

They were doing the dictionary in Inuinnaqtun, and are almost done and hoping to go to publication in the next two years. They are making a learning CD in Inuinnaqtun; it has been published from last year. It is the basics for someone wanting to learn it.

Inuinnaqtun CDs

Working with the Family Literacy program, they have made some fun packs for the kids to take home, with games, songs, and chants.
In October they had Spirit Walker Productions come up and record the Elders singing their drum dance songs, the church choir, and kids singing in Inuinnaqtun. They hope to have that CD next year for sale.

Inuinnaqtun Radio Show

Inuinnaqtun classes are held in the evening for parents and children. There is also another one for just adults to go to. They also have an Inuinnaqtun radio show that goes on once a week. That is about where they are in our language programs.

Victor Allen (Inuvialuktun region):

Victor Allen is an Elder from Inuvik. Our Elders are working hard to represent the people so they will have little language sections amongst themselves, amongst the young people of today. The kids are very proud even though they don't speak the language. They live off the land and follow our traditions.

Enjoyment of the Language

There is a system in a language that they have to work with young people; they need some words and advice on how it should be done. "I think it is our job to help the younger people. Even my kids who are in their early thirties are always happy to go to their auntie's or something to just have a good session. They like a good laugh about languages and to enjoy themselves."

Rosa Mantla (Dogrib region):

Dogrib Cultural Instructor

Rosa Mantla has been the principal of the Princess Elizabeth Mackenzie School for the past three years. Ever since working with children as a classroom assistant, her passion has been to save the Dogrib language as well as our culture. She keeps encouraging and organizing Dogrib and cultural programs. She managed to organize the camps and programs for the Dogrib Instuctor and other people who come into the school.

Broken Language

She really wanted the children to maintain their culture and language so she plans three or four land trips for the year. Preschool to grade three is a day trip and grades four to six are two nights. Children can be exposed to the land. For some, it is an eye opener and for some children it is where they learn most, as they are free to explore and enjoy nature. Most of the young children have broken language.

Lack of Resource People

Every year at the beginning of the year she organizes opening of the school year with opening of the fire. In October, Elders are invited to come to the school to mingle with the students, and have drum dances. David Gon was invited into the school everyday to sing to the children all the Dogrib songs with a singing assembly at the end of the week.

Dogrib Orthography

Aboriginal names for each month are on the calendars. Legends are read to the classes in the Dogrib languages. The drumming program has two young people teaching it. There is a lack of training for the resource people needed.

If the preschool children are taught the language at an early age, it is good because that is when they should be taught oral language.

Dogrib Languages Community Report
Dogrib Community Services Board

The DCSB looks after education, social services and health services for the communities of Gameti, Wekweti, Rae-Edzo and Wha Ti. This situation is unique in the NWT, in that this is the only board that looks after all three of these services together. It also is responsible for education in Dettah. This situation is unique in the NWT, in that this is the only board that took a lead role and looks after all three services together. The DCSB encourages on-the-land participation in culture camps. Some needs identified include: more funding to run land camps, training for teachers and developing lesson plans.

Promotion of the Dogrib Language

Important board documents are translated into Dogrib Orthography.

Signage

Signs on all buildings and offices of the DCSB are bilingual Dogrib and English.

Dogrib Resource Development

Literacy

Language and Culture Co-ordinator

Language Interpreter and Translator

Language Specialist and Culture Instructor

Dogrib resource material development is ongoing. As well, Dogrib Literacy, with training, courses and professional development for teachers. "The DCSB is committed to employment and necessary training of Dogrib-speaking employees to positions with the board. The DCSB has a Language and Culture Co-ordinator, as well as a Dogrib Language Interpreter & Translator. In addition, there are several positions than enhance course offerings including a Dogrib Language Specialist and Culture Instructor. Additional resource people include, Elders, educational assistants, special needs assistants, secretaries, custodians and bus drivers. Some course offerings now include Dogrib drumming, Dogrib history and spirituality.

Edzo's Chief Jimmy Bruneau School and Wha Ti's Mezi Community school both offer K-12. Gameti's Jean Wetrade Gameti School and Wekweti's Alexis Arrowmaker School both offer K-9. Elizabeth Mackenzie School in Rae is K-6. There are two pre-schools in Wekweti and Rae. There's also a day-care in Edzo at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School. Their schools are named after people who are recognized in our communities by their people.

Dogrib Language and Culture Programs

Dogrib Language and Culture Programs

The community schools in this region teach students about the significance of the feeding the fire ceremony, trapping and public speaking. Students spend time at a fish camp and on summer canoe trips, as part of our Dogrib Language and Culture Programs. Rae's school also offers puberty camp, winter camp, drumming and students who do Dogrib prayers (Rosary) in Church. Dettah offers Kaw Tay Whee in its K-8 program.

Dogrib Language Program

Dogrib Language Taught

For Grades K-4, a half-hour of Dogrib language is taught two days a week. For Grades 5-9, lessons are increased to three days a week. The school's secretary, janitor and pre-school teachers often converse in Dogrib both among themselves and with the visiting public. Students sang Christmas songs translated into Dogrib as a special feature of the Christmas concert.

Chief Jimmy Bruneau School (Rita Mueller report)

Each day students start with the Lord's Prayer and a reflection for the day said in Dogrib. Students K-9 take Dogrib language classes throughout the entire school year and are expected to take part in the school's on-the-land program. Typical on-the-land activities include:

- Fish camps
- Trapping and hunting
- Study and use of traditional plants and berries
- Study & use of animals and fish, their habitat, use of their meat, body parts and fur
- Survival techniques and skills
- Gravesite cleanup and recognition
- Canoeing and water safety
- Hide uses and preparation
- Traditional legends, storytelling Dogrib History
- Food preparation, cooking on the land.

Elders in Lead Role

Elders are an important part of these activities and often take a lead role. Joe Mantla, the culture instructor and Dave Fraser also lead instruction, set up and organize the various activities and programs. Most K-9 classes go out on the land at least once every two-three weeks. Grades 10-12 have locally developed culture and Aboriginal language courses to choose from. They include traditional Dogrib sewing and beading, Dogrib Drumming, trails of ancestors, to name a few. In physical education instruction, there is a 3-week traditional Dene and Inuit games module. During the year, there are many school-wide activities and ceremonies that incorporate culture and language.

Elizabeth Mackenzie Elementary School

The school day begins with all announcements done in Dogrib. The school walls are decorated with signs and posters written in Dogrib. Dogrib lessons are 30 minutes a day and there are many annual programs such as feasts and drum dances. Fish camps give students a chance to learn about different kinds of fish in the area and their traditional uses. There are winter and fish camps. Students set nets, make dry fish and dry meat, gather firewood, make bannock. They also learn water, boat and outdoor safety. These camps give students a chance to learn their cultural traditions and to practice them, as well as socialize with classmates outside of school. Participating students went by boat to the Frank Channel for the Culture Camp.

KTW Dettah (Ron Cleary report)

Feeding of the Fire Ceremonies

Elders are invited to tell stories, legends and come to the school in December for an appreciation luncheon. Students and staff can participate in annual spring camps. Gina Maclean and Verna Crapeau co-teach Dogrib for half an hour, every day, to all the students. As a link to the Community, there are feeding of the fire ceremonies held

with the community, usually co-ordinated by an Elder. Berry picking and caribou hunts are other ways they have participated in the past.

Wha Ti (Wayne Fehr report)

The Dogrib Language Program is offered to all grade levels, K to 12. Mary Adele Flunkie teaches this program for 30 minutes, at each grade level. Elders and resource people often join the classes. Dogrib songs were included in the Christmas concert. The culture program has become a greater focus during this year. There are attempts to have students out on the land more often. Considerable investment was made into new snowmobiles, ice fishing equipment, a new sleigh, chain saw, tents and an overhaul of boat motors.

Identified training and resource needs

Dogrib Nursery Rhymes

More training is necessary for all levels, linguistics, and especially reading and writing Dogrib. There is a need for more books, copies of books we already have, big books rewritten in Dogrib, original nursery rhymes, stories and music. These are requirements for pre-school teachers, day care staff and K-12 Dogrib teachers. Other developmental materials would be beneficial.

Eye Ts'ehxa (The Drumbeat)

A literary magazine features writing and artwork of the students in DCSB schools. It is a collection of student writing and artwork, giving students a chance to express themselves and be heard. Stories, poems and illustrations are by students from DCSB schools. Some of their titles include, The Bushman, Dogzilla, The Swamp, Vampirella and How the Raven Lost his Beak. In the past couple of years, there have been a few things that were happening in our region. One was a program aired on CBC, On The Road Again. They went to Rae and toured the schools. They had hand games, a drum dance, and caribou stew. Wayne Rostad just wanted to know how a Dogrib community lived. In the High School, they had a canoe trip where the students went to the barren lands and returned. There was 18 grade ten to twelve students on the trip. Out of the 18, only one of them did not return. He came back by plane. They told me of their trip in Dogrib. One other trip that was done went to Scotland because there have artifacts there from the Dogrib region from the Hudson Bay Company, way back from 150 years ago.

On the Land Canoe Trip

Mary Richardson:

Mary Richardson is a community educator in the Dogrib Region. She has been teaching for the past eleven years since the Board of Education implemented the aboriginal languages into the curriculum. She teaches cultural programs in the community of Rae and other communities in adult education. Last year, medical, legal and mining terminology workshops were offered to give a refresher course to interpreters and people who are interested in interpreting as a profession. Elders, youth and translators are involved in the workshops. These workshops are in the Dogrib language. Difficulty was found translating the terminology into Dogrib.

Language Through Music

The teachers in Rae said music was the key way for the children to learn the language. That thought was taken into adult education as well; it has worked out well. They are teaching the Elders and the youth.

Mary has been from community to community to help teach people to read and write in their native language. It is nice to see so many people wanting to keep their language alive. The younger people have requested to learn to pray in their language

and Community Services has come up with prayers in our language. A lot of youth interpret the written English into Dogrib.

Language Teaching CDs

Requests have been made for a CD program to teach the children Dogrib in the home. This CD would be used on a computer for public use. Wha Ti has one of the programs and that is how most of the English speaking teachers are learning to speak the language.

"We need a lot of development in resources and materials to succeed in our task of keeping languages alive. We need to come up with professional language instructors in aboriginal communities in the NWT. As a group, we need to work together on this. If we have our own language spoken in our communities daily, our children will learn the language and be proud of who they are.

Nature as a Resource

"There are times when I have the opportunity to coordinate camps; I can see the students change into people with respect, their whole personality changes. You need to teach the language out on the land so the children will learn what you are teaching them, as nature is a part of what we are teaching them."

(Translator) Elizabeth Mackenzie (Dogrib Region):

"First thing out of our mouths is Language"

Mrs. Mackenzie is from Rae, one of the Elders. She has been to residential school. She is a strong supporter of education. People pretty well have to consider what is important for day-to-day living. The first thing out of our mouths day to day is our language. Language is important, and so is culture do to this. People have to be adapted to their surroundings. If there are a lot of young students out on the land, they will adapt easy. She would like the education to be out on the land to experience what Elders have experienced in the past -- not in the classroom. Language is not a dying thing; the youth just need to be encouraged to speak it. Respect for culture, our land, our environment, and each other are important. The great legend of Yamoreya shows the importance of this.

Language in Early Childhood

She would like to see some instructors that are aware of the history of the Dene people in the NWT teach in the schools. The Dene history seems to be diminishing because it is not taught in the schools. She is a strong believer in learning your own language in early childhood.

Fibbie Tatti:

I really enjoyed Mrs. Mackenzie's comments that children learn their language by living the experience. It is our own people that have to be the teachers. It is the only way they learn their own language and learn about who they are as a people. I think it is beautiful how she expresses herself, she is an inspiration to us and especially, to her own people as well.

JC Catholique (Chipewyan Region):

JC's region has its own language committee under Akaitcho government. He likes the display too, and thinks people sometimes through their own development are ashamed of who they are. He thinks residential school played a big part in it and most people have to overcome that. People have gotten back our language and culture, and it is good.

It makes more sense to pray in your own language, "I have come to know the importance of the language. It is a great gift The Creator has given us, it is only fitting we pass it on to our youth.

Importance of History

"One of the things we tried was to learn more about our history. We wanted to document a lot of the stories from the Elders. We wanted to develop a book on our history and culture.

"We have a program teaching small children the language and culture. It is taught by an Elder. Last year we had a medical terminology workshop, in February. We came up with another set of words and we translated the twelve-step AA program and the serenity program for the AA program."

Elders are Keepers of Language and Culture

Someone from Lands and Environment, which has all the Elders, is working with the office. They do research on the land, and environmental studies which they use the Elders for. The Elders keep our language and culture alive. They should take over the language program as they are very well organized.

There are different committees within the communities that do different programming for languages. Some do on the land programs, teaching traditional life skills.

Last summer during the spiritual gathering they went to where the old lady sits on the falls, they had youth canoe from Atulla Lake down. There were five canoes and everything went according to plan. It was well organized. They had to get their own food, which taught them a few new things. By the time they came back they had changed in personality, they were more connected to the land.

Gatherings

"One of the things we have been doing since 1982 is Dene Gathering. We had one this year in Manitoba. There were about 900 people there. There, even the little children speak their own Dene language. They have their own Elders who help them get into their drumming. They do a round dance; their dance is different than ours.

Curriculum Should Reflect Language and Culture

"Language development needs more youth speaking it and passing it on. People have to get serious about what youth are being taught at the schools. While it is sometimes important to learn the English language, we have to keep ours alive also. I would like to see a school with full immersion. The curriculum should change to reflect our language and culture. "

Georgina Biscaye (Chipewyan Region):

In Fort Resolution there is a committee with thirty-four members on it, which started with ten Elders and twelve youth. A number of things have been done to bring back the language in the community.

Genealogy

The Elders panel on the committee makes all the final decisions. They have collected a lot of legends which the Elders have lost parts of. A genealogy was done on all the Elders in Fort Resolution to figure out where people came from.

Chipewyan Language Tapes

Terminology workshops on the literacy, environmental and medical terminology were undertaken. Chipewyan language tapes were produced with a text. Chipewyan prayers were written out. There was a program with Elders and youth on the land. Chipewyan hymns were sung during Christmas Mass. Chipewyan alphabet books were published.

Culture camps with the Elders and the youth were run. Most of the programs involve youth and Elders together.

"If you want to bring back the language, you have to think of how it used to be taught. We cannot bring back our language without the Elders. The language is starting to

slowly come back in our community. In 1996, there was maybe 26% of the Fort Resolution population spoke our language now the number is much higher."

Meetings Conducted in Chipewyan

Meetings are done in Chipewyan.

Marcel Norn (Chipewyan Region):

Youth and Elders Programs

Marcel Norn is an Elder from Fort Resolution. " If you want to save your traditional language, you have to teach it to the young people. In 1954, I went trapping with an Elder, after one year he had taught me how to do trapping. After two years I got married and taught my children how to live on the land. That is how I retained my culture and my language. One of my grandsons came to live with me so he could learn to live on the land. I teach him how to live on the land. I taught my grandson how I learned how to retain my culture and my language. He still attends school. Education is important. If you lose you culture or language you have to work hard at it, it is the only way to get it back."

DAY TWO, Wednesday February 5, 2003

Rosa Mantla: (Opening prayer)

Bill Erasmus:

Bill Erasmus is National Chief of the Dene Nation. He was in Fort Providence yesterday at an education meeting that Minister Jake Ootes organized and in a way, and he found it to be similar to what the advisory board was doing. People are very concerned about education. "We're finding that many young people are not finishing high school and for some time we have been talking about implementing self-government, and caring for ourselves. If you look at all the agreements already put in place; people in those regions have not been prepared and do not have those skills for governments. That is difficult because we may have the right but we do not have the resources or the skills to govern ourselves in a responsible way. The discussion in Fort Providence is on developing leadership, and insuring that people are going through the system to be able to take care of our future."

Language Completes You

"I think if you don't have your language, you are not complete as a person. If you are not complete as a person, your family is not complete. Your community is not complete, and your Greater Nation is not complete.

Loss of Language means loss of a lot of other things too.

"Nationhood constitutes a number of characteristics, including your own history, culture, laws, economics, land, and language. The loss of a language means a loss of a whole lot of other things.

"We need to understand the importance of language. There is a reason we were given a language and we have to maintain it. The responsibility is on all of us, parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. What I have noticed is those who can speak our languages are passing on and there are no younger people to replace them. If we did replace them the younger person's language use and understanding is not as superior to the one who passed on. Unless we do something that will have our youth learn, speak, use, and feel good about ourselves we will lose it. The key is our languages are official, and they have to then be regarded as official languages, looked at no less than English or French.

"Over the course of the next two years the government is going to review where the language dollars are spent. The money goes to the Territorial government then out to

where it needs to go. We need to get hold of those funding sources. We need to make our own priorities and utilize them the best way to help our languages.

"The AFN just recently secured 170 Million for aboriginal languages over the next three years for languages. We work with the Assembly of First Nations, each region gets some money, and we are the body who distributes it to the communities. We want to improve so the languages are involved and can distribute it to the communities.

Not enough Recognition for Language Advocates

"You do not get recognized enough for the work you do. You do what you can and I want to encourage you to continue doing it. Mahsi"

Mary Richardson (Dogrib):

Mary Richardson is from Rae- Edzo. She has been involved in language for the past eleven years. One thing the Dene Nation should take on is to enhance linguistic programs for the whole NWT. Rather than going south to get our linguistics, we can do it here. Would your department be able to support someone who was going south to take such a course?

Bill Erasmus:

"It is a little difficult to answer your question, as I do not know how these people are funded. The funding we get is to strengthen the language and there are guidelines we have to follow. We normally have a speaker from each language sitting on a committee that accepts proposals from each region. Based on the proposals they get funding. I wouldn't be opposed to supporting people getting their linguistics.

"We always have to go south for training, it may be more productive to bring the trainers north and do the training up here."

Mary Richardson:

"Rather than the Department of Education managing the aboriginal funding why can't the Dene First Nation take on that to look after it? Then they can distribute the funding available to the aboriginal people in the North. The smaller communities are really losing their languages."

Bill Erasmus:

Promotion of Language and Culture

"We would be open to that sort of discussion. We need to understand we also have the Dene Cultural Institute who is more responsible for that kind of thing. When they were set up, they were set to promote our culture and languages; they have done some work in curriculum as well. One of their primary focuses was to promote language and culture. I think we need to have a discussion of taking control of our languages and the money needed to revive them with our leaders. They have to agree that it needs to be focused or funneled in a different way."

Paula Anderson:

"You are talking about funding for some of the language communities, does that include Cree? The reason I ask is Cree is Algonquin. About a year and a half ago I approached the Dene Cultural Institute and they told me there was no funding for Cree because it is an Algonquin language not Dene. "

Bill Erasmus:

"It does include Cree; if you look at the Dene Nation constitution it does recognize Cree. When proposals do come forward, they are accepted. Fort Smith Cree has received funding through Barb Heron."

Paula Anderson:

"Barb Heron is Chip and as far as I know the Cree Language Program did approach the Dene Cultural Institute for help not money and I was told they do not include Cree. I left it at that and I shouldn't have. If I were to write up a proposal, as long as it meets the criteria I should get funding?"

Bill Erasmus:

"That is right. Thank you."

Andy Norwegian:

Dene Nation Policy on Language

"You were talking about the Dene Nation Constitution, I was wondering if Dene Nation has a written policy on languages? In our region, the various bands always tell us that they support language and cultural programs within the communities and within the regions. Yet, when you take a look at the individual bands they don't really have a clearly worded policy on language. This is also at the regional level. It is difficult where to look for support. There is only their word that they support such programs, it is not in writing. Does the Dene Nation Constitution clearly state their support for language and cultural programs?"

Bill Erasmus:

"The constitution does not clearly state what you are asking. It makes reference to and states which languages constitute the Nation. It also talks about maintaining our culture and languages. One of our largest goals is language. It makes it clear what languages are covered under the Dene Nation. Our mission statement talks about sovereignty as a people, as a nation. We are quite open to having a clear statement we can adopt that makes it explicit that language is our priority."

Jessie Campbell (North Slavey Region):

"I would like to know if, last year in Tulita you had an Elders and youth conference, can the schools and TLC's aboriginal language instructors be invited to conferences such as these?"

Bill Erasmus:

"We do have summaries and minutes, and most of it was on video. Yes, they are available and yes you can be invited to our Elders and Youth Meetings. We had the first meeting in the beginning of March 2002. In that meeting, we had 60-70 Elders from regions in the NWT. The meeting went well and they passed a motion saying they would like to meet like that every year. They also want to include the youth. They would like to rotate each year from the northern to southern part. It will be an Elders Meeting including Youth and people are invited to come to the meeting. Part of the discussion last year was our languages."

Jessie Campbell:

"Is there a procedure we have to go through to get the tapes or minutes? How do we go about it?"

Bill Erasmus:

'Contact our office, let them know who you are and let them know what you would like. They can make them available for you."

Doris Camsell (South Slavey Region):

"The Dene Cultural Institute in Hay River, I believe in the past had taken on too many proposals doing various language research. We as workers in the language area in the schools, in the past were told we could not access that information. They were documented and as of today, I still have difficulty going into Dene Cultural Institute to ask for access to any information I may need. Is there a way I can go about gaining access?"

Bill Erasmus:

"I wasn't aware people were having difficulty getting access to it. Do you know if it is because it is still in its raw form and hasn't been edited or available to use in a professional way? Do you know what the problem is?"

Doris Camsell:

Access to Research

"I believe after Joanne Barnaby left the Dene Cultural Institute, Jean was in a process of cataloguing a lot of this information. For example, I know that there was a research done on the Hay River Falls. I was trying to access some of that information and was told I am not allowed to get any of that information. I am not sure why."

Bill Erasmus:

School Working with Elders

"I really cannot answer that question for you. In terms of ownership, I don't know how the information was gathered or for what purpose. Normally the information they have is belonging to the communities. You should have access to it. What we are doing is Joanne Barnaby and Jean Broda is no longer there, Raymond Sonfrere is now the executive director. They have a new board, new Elders council, and they are making some major efforts to improve on what happened in the past. Our office is beginning to work quite closely with them. I have been down to the reserve twice since November and I had a chance to go through their information, talk with them, and meet with them. All I can say is I can try to help to find out more about that and make sure that the information they have is available to people, because the way I understand it is the information does belong to the people. Thank you."

Doris Camsell:

"I have another question. The lady mentioned the Elders Conference, I believe about a year or so ago there was an Elders Conference in Hay River. My dad was sitting in on it; he said the topic was languages. He was wondering why I wasn't part of it. I went and took an hour to go over there. I found it quite interesting what the concerns the Elders were talking about in the Deh Cho area. Then I realized when I left there; I too would like to have access to the videos and minutes that were taken there. I would also be nice to actually be a part of that as well. We are the ones that are trying to keep the language alive but it feels like we are separated. I am in the school

system, the Elders are talking over there, and it doesn't seem like we are together. It would be nice to be invited. Mahsi."

Bill Erasmus:

"I think the meeting you are referring to in Hay River was a Deh Cho sponsored meeting. I am not aware of that meeting. The one we were talking about was in Tulita. As I said we do have the information from that, and it is available. Our meeting is primary for Youth and Elders but the doors are open. We are open to having other people there. Thank you."

Unknown:

"I think some of the problems may be related to copyright issues. I don't know when these meetings are conducted whether there is an agreement with the Elders. The information they share is going to be used for a specific purpose. I think it would be really good if the Elders are informed before hand that some of the information they share could be used in the school programs and in curriculum development for language and culture purposes. If the Elders were made aware that, some of the information may be shared in that way it will eliminate all of the problems we are faced with. I had my own difficulties trying to access information. You pretty well have to go to some of these institutions in person to access some of the information. You are not allowed to sign out or photocopy some of the documents. You pretty well have to sit there and read it yourself before you can use the information. We have to create a situation where the information is shared a lot more easily. Thank you."

Bill Erasmus:

"I don't know how much time we have on this subject. I think some of the difficulty we have to realize is people like the Dene Cultural Institute and our office is that we have a lot of information. This is the thirty-third year of the operation of the Dene Nation. We have thirty-three years of archives. We do have a library archives at our office, and it is in paper, tape, video, and there is a whole number of different kinds of information. The difficulty we have is there is not funding for First Nations Librarians and archivists. A lot of the information we have is raw information and sometimes it is hard to give it out as it is. I think that maybe some of the problem is as Doris mentioned is that Jean Broda was trying to collate and get the information in a way that is manageable and making sense to people. That may be part of the problem because you have to catalogue the information; it has to be organized and accessible. Thank you."

Cataloguing Information

Doris Camsell:

"I just have one more question regarding proposals. I wanted to do traditional place names on the Mackenzie River. I wrote out a proposal last year, I had no idea and still have no idea where to send it. I went to George Cleary; he said I should send it to Joseph Neyelle. I don't have an idea where to send this proposal at all. There are those types of things that are hindering us from getting more information and making use of our Elders. It would be nice to have an updated list of who is in what department, what are they responsible for, and who do we speak to for certain issues. In our school alone, we are only allotted so much money for the year for our program. I would like to know where I could get more money for our programs at the schools."

Traditional Place Names

Bill Erasmus:

Learning from Each Other

"I think there are so many things that need to be done. Maybe we should share or have a joint language conference that brings the leaders and the people working in this field together so we understand the difficulties and problem areas. That might be one of our answers. I just want to say to the Inuvialuit also; I really think we need to work closely with them, I think we could probably learn from each other. We could learn from them on some of the projects that are taking place and some of the things that are happening to maintain our languages. We live in the same area, we have overlapping interests, and I really think we need to work with them in the East as well as the West. There may be a large majority of Inuvialuit in the East but they are in danger of losing their language also. Mahsi."

Nancy Gardiner:

Nancy Gardiner gave a presentation on this special report called: "Keeping Our Minds Strong" which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly this past October. Advisory Board members were given handouts of the 15 recommendations and Ms. Gardiner discussed them during a PowerPoint presentation.

The intent of the report is to how we can best serve the North and the people. Also, to ensure that the spirit of the Official Languages Act is upheld. The report hopefully, will open up debate, lead to action, and place it closer to the forefront of the political agenda.

Fibbie Tatti:

"These recommendations are an accumulation of what we have been saying at the last two advisory boards. It was tabled it at the Legislative Assembly. So, these recommendations are coming as a direct result from these meetings here. We have also submitted a copy to the Special Committee on the Review of Official Languages."

Recommendations Resulting from the Advisory Board Meetings.

Recommendation 1
Each Aboriginal language should have a Language Plan.
A Language Plan should include a commitment of GNWT resources required to reverse Language Shift and address many long outstanding issues such as the need for I/T training, certification and employment opportunities.

- The NWT as a whole lacks an effective language plan.
- There is no overall government approach to language.
- Most NWT territorial aboriginal languages range from 6-8 in the Fishman model.
- What is lacking is a language plan that:
  i. Confirms where each aboriginal language operates in a model
  ii. Outlines specific programs and services that address language revitalization
  iii. Confirms resources required to reverse language shift -- language usage at lower levels would require more resources
  iv. Identifies performance measurement indicators that track efforts to reverse language shift.
- Currently, there are community language plans but these plans are tailored to the resources available, not vice-versa.

Recommendation 2
A "Cultural and Language Secretariat" should be established with the lead responsibility for Language Revitalization planning, coordination, and program-service delivery. Culling program and service resources from other departments could establish such an institution where Language Revitalization programs and services are lost within the main focus of the department.

- There are too many departments and organizations involved in Aboriginal Language revitalization, with different objectives and agendas
- There are overlaps in delivery of programs and services and serious gaps.
- There is no evaluation system.
- There is no track of language shift.
- With improved inter-organization co-operation and direction, this could be reduced.
- Opportunity of using scarce resources to cost share
- Development of Research, terminology
- Promote the value and importance of Language and culture
- The overall aim of the Secretariat would be better use of limited resources through effective planning and focus delivery and inter-agency co-ordination.
- It keeps the issue of languages in the forefront of the political agenda.
- It gives Official languages a high profile
- It prevents the issue of language being lost in different departments

Recommendation 3
NWT Aboriginal persons who speak their language and who understand and respect the Aboriginal perspective should be involved in the redrafting of the Official Languages Act.

- English and French are accorded much higher status over Aboriginal languages.
- Legislative Assembly presentations can be made in either English or French, but for Aboriginal languages -- on an "as-needed" basis. The term is not defined.
- The Official Languages Act groups languages together such as North and South Slavey, Inuvialuktun and Inuinnaqtun all in one.
- All Acts and Journals must be printed in both English and French, but in Aboriginal languages if directed by the Commissioner.
- Government's interpreter service is mandatory for English and French, but only in Aboriginal Official Language if there is "significant demand" or due to the "nature of the office". Both requirements are undefined.
- The overall OLA lacks an Aboriginal perspective.
- The Act itself is written in English.
- Language is lived and therefore, requires an Aboriginal-speaking person's involvement in the writing of the Official Languages Act.

Recommendation 4
A revised Act should enhance and expand the legal status of all official NWT Aboriginal languages.

- The Act does not provide a definition for language, nor does it have a criteria for Official Language Status.
- The Advisory board says that a criteria should be established to determine the recognition for Official Aboriginal Language status.
- The criteria should be based on language that originated and grew out of a life lived on the land.
- The land creates a place for language.

- The Advisory Board members say language criteria selected must reflect that each Aboriginal language lies within a specific geographic area, whose boundaries reflect pre-contact and the traditional economic, linguistic and cultural practices of each group.
- For this reason, South Slavey, North Slavey, Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun should be designated Official Languages.

Recommendation 5
The NWT Official Languages Act should include criteria for determining which Aboriginal languages qualify as official Aboriginal Languages in the NWT.

- These criteria should be based on the recognition that aboriginal languages originated and grew out of a life lived on the land.
- Language criteria must reflect that each Aboriginal language lies within specific geographic areas whose boundaries reflect pre-contact, and the traditional, economic, linguistic and cultural practices of each group.

Recommendation 6
All official Aboriginal languages currently recognized in the Official Languages Act should be scrutinized against these criteria.

Recommendation 7
Based on this criteria, South Slavey, North Slavey, Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun should be designated as official Aboriginal languages in an amended Official Languages Act.
(5, 6, & 7 speak for themselves)

Recommendation 8
The NWT Official Languages Act should define more expansively, based on need. The circumstances in which government has a legal obligation to use official Aboriginal languages, including directing government departments to provide high quality language service in the official Aboriginal languages, beyond the current limits of significant demand or nature of the office.

- The client should not be required to prove the need for a service in their Aboriginal language.
- There is currently no GNWT obligation to provide aboriginal language services in Official Aboriginal Languages.
- The words "language rights" should mean there is a legal obligation to provide government services in the Official languages.
- The Advisory Board members cite four examples where services have not been readily available in the Official Aboriginal Languages:
    i. Use of Official Languages in the NWT Legislative Assembly;
    ii. Government documents;
    iii. Language rights in courts;
    iv. Government-delivered services.
- Under the current construction of the OLA, a person or group has to show significant demand or the important nature of the office to establish need for services.
- The onus for obtaining interpreting-translating services rests with the individual or group.
- With these restrictions, government departments are not obliged to offer efficient or effective language services -- it's on a case-by-case basis.

Recommendation 9
The Official Languages Act should provide for official language teacher training (including daycare and pre-school teachers) and interpreter/translator (I/T) training. Further, the Act should set high standards regarding accurate interpreting and

translation and highlight the importance of language research and government department use of technical terminology. (Speaks for itself)

Recommendation 10
The Official Languages Act should retain the Office of the Languages Commissioner to ensure that the Act is enforced.

- The independent nature of this OLC Office from the government;
- The ability to investigate independently;
- It keeps languages in the forefront.
- It speaks to the importance of the languages to the NWT, just by having this office.
- It's a focal point and maintains languages on the political agenda.
- It is the Office of last resort.

Recommendation 11
The Official Languages Act should place a greater emphasis role of the Office of the Languages Commissioner in actively promoting the Official Languages of the NWT.

Recommendation 12
Out of respect for each Official Language, the Office of the Languages Commissioner and the Languages Commissioner should be named in the Official Languages Act in at least one Official Aboriginal Language, in addition to English and French.

Recommendation 13
The provisions of the Official Languages Act requiring a review of Act every ten years should be retained.

- The Language Commissioner of Canada stated how much she would have liked to have that review of the Official Languages Act of Canada, so that they can monitor how well they are doing and what changes need to be made for an effective implementation.

Recommendation 14
The Official Languages Act should expand the role of the Office of the Languages Commissioner to include a broad evaluation function with respect to implementation of the spirit and intent of the Act.

- Expanding the role to include evaluation would ensure ongoing systematic evaluation between 10-year periods.
- It should have an expanded role in evaluation.
- Establishing a certification process for Interpreter-translators.
- Interpreter-translator registry.

Recommendation 15
In a revised Act, the independence of the Office of the Languages Commissioner should be clarified and enhanced, including separating its day-to-day financial and administrative operations from the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

- The general population still believes that the Language Commissioner's Office belongs to the Legislative Assembly.
- This perception takes away from the independent nature of this Office.
- By controlling finances and administrative operations, the Legislative Assembly inadvertently controls what happens in the Office of the Languages Commissioner.

Fibbie Tatti:

What is the department's policy toward languages in the aboriginal languages? The government has no unified approach toward aboriginal languages. It seems like everything is put into place then they look to see where languages can be added to it. We are saying aboriginal languages should be right at the beginning when you are planning. There should be a government-wide approach to aboriginal languages and its implementation within government.

You ask any government person in Nunavut, "What is your language policy? What are you guys working towards? What is your unified approach towards languages?" They say by the year 2020 Inuktitut is going to be the working language of the government in Nunavut. That is what they are working towards. In the NWT what is this government's goal? What we have by having this ten-year review is an evaluative system.

Break for lunch

Review of Recommendations of Past Languages Commissioners

Recommendation One:
The GNWT give clear direction to all departments and institutions about how to apply for funding under the Secretary of State Agreement and that they assist them in developing proposals that meet the required criteria.

Recommendation Two:
- The GNWT advise the public immediately of the coming into effect of:
  the new sections of the Official Languages Act;
- Any Act or Regulation relating to the status and the use of the official languages;
- Any guidelines or policies related to their implementation.

All of these should be written in plain languages because people get this stuff translated and you have to go through it, figure out what it means, then translate trying to find the right words. All this should be recorded orally because we are an oral culture. It should be recorded in all the Official Languages by an interpreter trained as a translator.

Recommendation Three:
The GNWT adopt a policy of active offer for the provision of Language Services by clearly identifying through signs, pins, buttons, and public announcements, offices where services be available in languages other than English, as required by section 14 of the Official Languages Act.

Recommendation Four:
The GNWT develop a policy on the provisions of interpreter/ translator services to all the departments and institutions. This would be done to ensure all employees know how to make services to the public available in all offices at all times, either through employees of the GNWT or through freelance interpreter/translators, as required by Section 14 of the Official Languages Act. \

Recommendation Five:
The Language Commissioners recommend that the GNWT ensure that positions responsible for providing services and programs in the Official Languages be filled without delay, or that the interim agreement arrangements will always be made.

Recommendation Six:
The interim, final activity, and financial reports of any future language agreements tabled in the Legislative Assembly to provide an opportunity for review by the House, and to keep the public informed.

Recommendation Seven:
The Legislative Assembly considers whether or not any provisions be made into the Official Languages Act for the travelling public. This is for if people are travelling outside the region where a language is spoken and what provisions should be made.

Recommendation Eight:
The Legislative Assembly clarifies if it was intended that the obligations in the Official Languages Act should apply to groups and bodies providing a service or program to the public on behalf of the GNWT or one of its institutions.

Recommendation Nine:
The Languages Commissioner recommended that the GNWT transfer responsibilities for some official languages programs and services to community groups while maintaining the adequate resources to meet their legal obligations under the Official Languages Act.

Recommendation Ten:
The Languages Commissioner recommended that when these transfers, occur the GNWT make it very clear what official language obligations must be met. We agree with this.

Recommendation Eleven:
The GNWT amend the Languages Act to include a timeframe in which the Legislative Assembly must respond to recommendations arising out of the Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner.

Recommendation Twelve:
The GNWT research and document Dene syllabics for historical purposes for the use of them in translations for the Elders when they specifically request it.

Recommendation Thirteen:
Whether or not the GNWT should consider it necessary to provide full interpretation in the Legislative Assembly at all times in all Official Languages as currently available.

Recommendation Fourteen:
The GNWT avoid all delays in filling positions responsible for the delivery of Official Languages programs and services required under the Official Languages Act. In addition that if some delay is unavoidable that an interim arrangement be made with the department or institutions responsible to ensure that the required language services are available at all times.

Recommendation Fifteen:
All Official Languages should be translated, orally with audiovisual, written, and also to be able to read their written language in their Aboriginal language.

Recommendation Sixteen:
The Languages Commissioner recommended that the GNWT better monitor the funding agreements with the Federal Government for the Official Languages; ensure funds not to lapse.

Recommendation Seventeen:
That a policy be developed on communicating information to the public using the media for all NWT official language groups.

Recommendation Eighteen:
That the GNWT establish more training programs for employees and members of the public who want to learn or teach official languages.

Recommendation Nineteen:
That the GNWT continue to inform the public and its employees of the standardized writing systems for native languages and that they support further research in this area.

Recommendation Twenty:
That the GNWT conduct a fair study of literacy and fluency for all Official Languages in the NWT. We recommend that the GNWT compiles the results of research related to the literacy and fluency for all official languages in the NWT.

Day three, Thursday February 6, 2003

Jane Charlie: (Opening Prayer)

"Good morning, my name is Jane. When I pray I always pray in my language. I always pray for everything. I have learned so much from you young people. I am so proud of you for all you are doing, do not give up and the young people will learn the language."

Fibbie Tatti:

Fibbie Greeted everyone and thanked them for coming. She then introduced David Krutko, who did the opening remarks. She stated that David has been instrumental in supporting the Languages Commissioners Office and thanked him for that support.

Fibbie explained that there is an Aboriginal Day because of how David worked in the House for it. As a result of Davids work and tenaciousness, the North now has an Aboriginal Day. Fibbie really appreciated him coming over and talking to us today as he and all other MLA's are getting ready to go into session.

David Krutko:

David Krutko, the MLA of Mackenzie Delta introduced himself and said he was glad to be here today. He said it is important that we bring our Elders into government and how we deal with issues.

"I would like to thank all of you here today because without people like you at the front lines dealing with language programs in our communities and also working on redeveloping and promoting Aboriginal Languages and languages in the NWT, it seems like an uphill battle trying to save a dying language, knowingly the numbers are going down and what you have to do.

"The federal funds we do get have to be refocused in such a way that we have teeth in legislation that we put forth.

"I think it is important that we take our languages out of the closet and promote them like every other language in this country. English has a lot to do with it. English is the language of choice around the world and has affected languages around the world.

As keepers of the language, you have to find a way of making that language part of everyday use. We have to be proud of our language by having language out in the open. We have allowed the English language to take over and we have to take that extra step of saying no, it is a second language and you have to deliver the first language in that community. This is the type of steps you have to take as for too long aboriginal languages were put in the closet. We have to find more time and new ways of teaching the language.

Language more visible in the NWT

"The Language Act is so vague a lot of departments do not offer you those services we thought were in place under the Languages Act. We need to change to have the languages more visible in the NWT, even nationally. Like the French have, the aboriginal languages should be getting protection by way of the Canadian Constitution and also by the way of the aboriginal agreements that are in place.

Use our Language

"Without the frontline workers and you who are here today, I think the languages would be a lot worse off than they are today. It is nice to see all of you here who are working out of the communities and the Elders continue to speak our language. It is important that we retain our languages. We have to find a way to allow the people in the communities to feel free to use their language in public. We have to get over that hurdle. We can blame who we want but at the end of the day we have to do more to promote, speak, and also use our language. That is something I feel strongly about. It has proven to be a challenge but if we all work together, we can overcome that challenge. "

Break

Presentation by the Prince of Wales Heritage Museum

Mark Heyck:

"This project was created at the museum a couple years ago out of the recognition that the Internet provides us with a lot of opportunities for getting out the information the museum has within its physical building. In a place like the NWT, it is ideal for us to use this technology because communities are so remote and isolated that it gives us the opportunity to make our resources available across the NWT. This is the first trail on our virtual map.

The Idaa Trail was a traditional Dogrib canoe route that stretched between Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes. Over the course of four summers, Dogrib Elders traveled along the trail documenting sites, collecting artifacts, and listening to Elders stories that were related to each site

"The museum took that information and crafted it into the type of resource that could be used by the general public, schools, students, and teachers to learn more about the culture of the Dogrib people. From that point, the concept of the virtual journey up the Idaa Trail blossomed. We decided to continually add resources on from the other cultures of the other peoples of the NWT. We are calling this "Lessons From the Land.

"The last birch bark canoe had been made in the Dogrib region in 1970 by Chief Jimmy Bruno. It was decided it would be a good idea to do a project where a group of Dogrib Elders would be brought together to rebuild a birch bark canoe for the first time in thirty years. In 1987, six Dogrib Elders along with a canoe builder from Southern Canada got together for two weeks at Russell Lake to build a birch bark canoe. The whole process of building the canoe was well documented in video, photographs, and interviews.

"Following the birch bark canoe project, we launched a project on the caribou skin lodge. A skin lodge had been purchased in the late 1800's by a professor from the United States named Frank Russell. That was the last remaining caribou skin lodge we knew of that came from the Western Arctic. In the early 1990's, that caribou skin lodge was re-patriated by the Dogrib Nation. Out of that re-patriation came another idea for a project, to rebuild a caribou skin lodge.

"We have been able to provide some context to that information. We had two major goals in mind for this website; 1) to improve the appreciation and understanding of First Nations cultures in the NWT, and 2) to take the resources we had and make them available to the entire world.

"In the case of the Idaa Trail, we were determined it would be available in Dogrib, English, and French. In some ways, this website is unique from others in Canada because there are few done completely in an aboriginal language.

"When we talked to the Dogrib educators, we decided we wanted to reach the kids in the NWT. More and more there is a disconnect between older and younger generations. More and more Elders and all the important knowledge are passing on. We felt it would be important to focus on children; to make sure we were crafting our information, our message, and values we were trying to get across into a very explicit format that they would be able to understand.

"We produced a Dogrib version of the site and had a translator narrate for educational purposes. In addition to the website story, we intend to produce a book sometime in the next year that will be in both English and Dogrib. That will be available through the website as a resource."

Elizabeth Mackenzie:

Historical and Spiritual Sites

"What has been compiled so far is a really good message. It is geared towards the younger people to learn because the past is a big part of our culture. The trail is going through some very historical and spiritual sites. There are a lot of old villages and gravesites that are on the Idaa Trail."

Doris Camsell:

Documentation of Trails all over the NWT

Doris said she's really happy to see the website. She would like to see a lot of this type of information done for all the language groups represented here in the NWT. We have traditional trails right from the border. There are trails all over the Mackenzie and in the Delta area as well.

Presentation of the "Screaming Eagle Dancers" from the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre.

Closing Remarks – Round Discussions & Comments

Victor Menacho:

Stories of the Past

"When we talk to each other, it is really important to remember to thank people. I would like to thank everyone here including the interpreters. I am really grateful to you for the work we have all done. It is important when we talk to our children to tell them stories of the past. Our culture is from the past and a lot of young people do not work at it. These stories are everywhere. I am really grateful and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you have said."

Fred Rabesca:

"We envy all who are doing so much on the most important aspect of our culture and that is language. I have learned a lot of things I didn't know before over the past three days at these meetings. "

Camilla Tutcho:

" When Elders Speak, You Should Listen and Respect Them"

"We have been sitting here for the past few days because we want our language to survive. We are losing the way our Elders lived in the past and at meetings we talk about it constantly. The presentation we saw this morning and we need more resources like that to educate others about the past. When Elders speak you should listen and respect them."

Albertine Ayah:

"Teach what we know"

Albertine said that we are supposed to teach what we know. Our land and language should be together, for when there is no language there is have no culture. The leaders should have the same strength for culture and languages like they do for our land.

Jane Modeste:

"Language is a Big Part of My Life"

Jane thanked everyone for the comments and the activities in the community's updates. She thinks it makes people feel stronger because it is still there and they are still concerned about it. People still mention the same concerns but it is in our hearts not just our heads. Language is a big part of her life.

Terry Douglas:

"We believe we are keepers of the language"

Terry wanted to repeat David Krutko's comment. He said we are keepers of the language and felt we really need to take that to heart. If we all believe in it , only good things can happen. An Elder said, "If we don't know who we are, we don't know where we are going to go. Because we have nothing to fall back on." Terry said that if we believe we are keepers of the language, it makes all of us take this to heart.

Elizabeth Mackenzie:

"We have a big strong voice and good spiritual mind"

Elizabeth said thank you that we have a big strong voice and good spiritual mind. "We would like to have the young people learn and pass on our language. You still need a good understanding of English."

Shannon Gullberg:

Shannon said that sometimes meetings like this can be discouraging, but that this meeting gained momentum.

Nancy Gardiner:

Nancy said you lose the history of your family when you lose your language. We hope through our Office we can help promote languages.

Other Advisory Board member comments:

- "We have to regain our language and our culture before it is completely gone."
- "Thank you all for all you have done to keep our language alive. We need dictionaries and curriculum development in schools and the history of the people of each nation. This way the children will be taught and know where they come from."
- "It is encouraging for young people to know their language and culture. We have to learn from our Elders. We have to teach the youth to speak the language, that way we preserve it for future generations. We need more Elders involved in the preservation of languages."
- "Most of us here have been engaged in languages for many years. I have focused on Elders in the communities on a higher level, as they will be the ones to teach us of the past and the language. Most of the leaders at a community level have to work together with each other to help the languages. Language really comes from the community and originates from the families in that community. We tried to revive the Dene Kede to inform people better at a community level. It would be great to have these meetings more often."
- "When education came it kind of killed our way of life. You still need to learn to live on the land. We need to work together (youth and Elders) to revive the languages."
- "When we are here together, I am happy. Our language we talk, our way of life. I would like to talk about our language. Our goals, customs, values, and cultures are alike, we all live on one land and do the same thing, and we fight for the same things."
- "Sometimes we work on what the Elders who are among us and take it into the future to teach the young people. Whoever works on their language, I am happy to hear what you have to say about the language. We have to support each other and let the Elders know of our progress. If we talk to our Elders, they can give us advice to take into the future."
- "My daughters would question me about Dene words while they were in school. Sometimes the meetings in my community are done in all Dene. Until we see each other again we have to pray for everyone."

Paula Anderson:

Paula's Elder had to leave but wanted her to thank you all and she thinks the meeting went well. Paula thinks it is good to get everyone together as there is sometimes not a lot of communication between us. She thought It was nice to hear that a lot of the regions are doing similar things in the revival of languages.

Joe Bonnetrouge:

Joe said he heard some good words at this meeting and people came from all regions of the NWT. Joe said he would to the school in Fort Providence to talk to the students in their language about their culture.

Fanny Swartzentruber:

"People have shared their heart thoughts with regards to languages during this meeting. Having this opportunity strengthens us. It is positive to hear the new thoughts and ideas that we can take home and find ways that we can help."

Camilla Tutcho:

"Elders, interpreters, language workers, dancers, Languages Commissioner, and the people who work with her to help us put our languages issues in their rightful place, thank you. It was nice to have the resource people to tell us of all the materials we have at hand and to encourage us to continue to do what we are doing in different possible ways. I believe that the Languages Centre would be nice to have away from Yellowknife, close to a spiritual place. I feel the Advisory Board should be in charge, with the help of the Elders, of distributing any funds we could get for languages. Next Advisory Board meeting should be in a Dene community, tent style with an open fire. Thank you to everybody here, my spirit is lifted."

Jane Charlie:

Jane was so thankful she sang one verse of: The Sweet By And By in her language to honor everybody on their way home.

Cynthia Wilna:

Cynthia said she found the meeting very informative and it is very encouraging to see everyone working together and sharing their efforts on preserving the aboriginal languages in their communities.

Betty Vittrekwa:

Betty thanked Fibbie and her staff for working hard for this to happen. "To all the Elders for being here and sitting around the table with us give us strength and encouragement. Thank you to all the translators for being here and translating. In the past few days you hear on the media about this meeting and imagine all the people from the communities are happy to have representatives here. Thank you for the three days being together. "

Eleanor Mitchell:

"At the beginning there were a lot of people telling what they were doing at their centers. I jotted down notes because there were a lot of ideas we never thought of doing. It is good to share these ideas. When we come to meetings like this it makes us stronger. Listening to legends in your language is more powerful than hearing it in English. These meetings bring it all to the front and make you think about the things you should do and want to do. Everybody had something good to say and hopefully we will take these ideas and put them to action when we get home. Mahsi."

William Firth:

William said it is good to hear people speak from their hearts because it encourages and inspires you. "

"To inspire and encourage people makes us think of stories about how we have gotten to where we are today in working with our languages. Mahsi for everyone of you for what you have said. That I take back with me, now I can continue on my journey. We have come this far together."

Fibbie Tatti:

"Each of you who have called me through the year and none of you know what that means to me. You lift my spirit, instill confidence in me, make me strong again and I thank you for that. An Elder told me: "Let the Creator bless you" and another Elder said: "let you be helped always in your life." I share that with you, as you are so valuable to your people. I want to thank all the Elders who came and would like to say thank you to the staff in our Office. "

Andy Norwegian:

(Closing Prayer).

APPENDIX TWO

Summary of Vote 1 and Vote 4 Allocations 2001-2002

Provided by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment

Total GNWT Official Languages Funding for 2001-2002 (Votes 1 and 4)

Aboriginal Languages		**Vote 4**	**Vote 1**
Teaching and Learning Centres Total		$ 475,000	$ 0
Beaufort-Delta DEC	$ 91,641		
Deh Cho DEC	$ 91,874		
Dogrib DEC	$ 78,505		
Sahtu DEC	$ 68,751		
South Slave DEC	$ 67,155		
YK 1 DEA	$ 39,130		
YK 2 DEA	$ 38,010		
Aboriginal Language and Cultural Instructor Program		$ 200,000	$ 0
Aboriginal Language Broadcasting		$ 175,000	$ 170,000
Interpreter/Translator Training Program		$ 30,000	$ 0
Language Planning		$ 30,000	$ 0
Language Promotion		$ 25,000	$ 0
Language Resource Development		$ 5,000	$ 0
Geographic Place Names		$ 15,000	$ 0
Terminology Development/Language Workshop (H&SS)		$ 45,000	$ 0
Language Communities Total	$ 1,343,000	$ 900,000	$ 443,000
Chipewyan	$ 193,000		
Cree	$ 107,000		
Dogrib	$ 339,500		
Gwich'in	$ 162,000		
Inuvialuktun	$ 267,500		
North Slavey	$ 214,000		
South Slavey	$ 224,500		
Other	$ 60,500		
Special Project: Special Committee to Review OLA		$ 100,000	
Literacy – Official Languages (from 2.4M Literacy Initiative)		$ 0	$ 300,000
Cultural Projects		$ 0	$ 66,000
Language Services Section – Admin.		$ 0	$ 280,000
Aboriginal Language School Programs Total	$ 5,835,711	$ 0	$ 5,836,000
Beaufort-Delta DEC	$ 1,536,324		
Deh Cho DEC	$ 779,689		
Dogrib DEC	$ 889,861		
Sahtu DEC	$ 738,368		
South Slave DEC	$ 1,150,783		
YK 1 DEA	$ 376,673		
YK 2 DEA	$ 330,297		
Conseil scolaire francophone	$ 33,716		
Total for Aboriginal Languages		**$ 2,300,000**	**$ 7,095,000**

Information provided by ECE

Total GNWT Official Languages Funding for 2001-2002 (Vote 4)

French Language		**Vote 4 only**	**(no Vote 1)**
Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages			
ECE	GNWT French Translation Services	$ 320,000	
	Services to the Public	$ 60,000	
	Policy and Coordination	$ 135,000	
	Language Promotion	$ 25,000	
	Community Funding (PDCC)	$ 145,000	$ 685,000
Justice	Legal Translation Services	$ 425,000	
	Services to the Public	$ 32,000	$ 457,000
H&SS	Policy and Coordination	$ 40,000	
	Services to the Public	$ 27,000	
	Services to the Public (Health Boards)	$ 178,000	$ 245,000
Executive	Services to the Public		$ 10,000
Finance	Services to the Public		$ 3,000
FMBS	Services to the Public		$ 4,000
Legislative Assembly	Services to the Public		$ 20,000
MACA	Services to the Public		$ 12,000
NWT Housing corporation	Services to the Public		$ 11,000
Public Works and Services	Services to the Public/Office Space		$ 86,000
RWED	Services to the Public		$ 35,000
Transportation	Services to the Public		$ 17,000
Workers' Compensation Board	Services to the Public		$ 14,000
NWT Power Corporation	Services to the Public		$ 1,000
Special Project: Special Committee to Review OLA			$ 50,000
Total			**$ 1,650,000**
Canada-NWT Agreement for French Language Education			$ 1,161,000
Total Funding for French			**$ 2,811,000**

Information provided by ECE